

MRS. GRETA FREEPORT BAXTER

You imagine that if you were years older or she years younger, you'd be her latin lover and she your Greta Garbo. Realistically, you'd be the grandson she'd have if she had ever married. Instead, she lives alone in the 20-odd room mansion on her acres of property on the rock-bound coast of Maine. Like a scene

from Dickens or possibly Thomas Hardy, you sit in the cavernous kitchen and the cook serves you chocolate cake and milk. All the people in her life, including you, are hired to be there. You were hired through Manpower to tend the gardens as a summer replacement. You feel at home and feel empathy for the monied old lady -- you tend her lawns and hedges and flower beds as if they were your own. She asks

what they pay you and doubles the amount. You row out to her sailing yacht and bask in the long afternoon sun. You decide that wealth is a made-to-order garment and fits you well.

The summer's end approaches and her regular gardener returns from his trip abroad. The old lady brings you into her home to polish silver. She wants to retain you forever but realizes that you will soon marry and move away to California. She gives you a hug and a kiss and a wedding gift in a small white envelope. You

imagine yachting with her to the Caribbean. And tea and cakes served on silver and strolls in a manicured garden by the sea. You imagine a youthful Greta who takes your arm in hers. She guides you to the boathouse on a humid afternoon where you make torrid love on a pile of canvas sail. Once you get outside, you tear

open the envelope. Love is a made-to-order garment and fits you well.

THE CLASSIC VACUUM CLEANER PLOY

No matter what the cost, your boss says, get it out to the truck. Promise them, swear to them -- that you won't do a thing. Offer them a free service check or a gratis minor adjustment. Just get it out to the truck! So the fleet moves out like on

D-Day, and you invade the upper-middle class neighborhoods, unsuspecting housewives kicking back for that 2nd amphetamine A.M. with cup o' coffee. Or maybe sublimating that lonely drive by tuning in the vibrator to Family Feud. You swoop in like the Green Berets -- fanning out with military precision and you take them. Once you get the vacuum

cleaner out to the van, you have them. Even if it's brand new, you strip it down and maybe, just maybe, some slight flaw will allow you to bring her the parts in hand. Wide eyed, incredulous, you hold them out -- an offering -- Look, lady, this is bad, you say. This belt is gonna go any day -- lucky it got this far.

She examines all the parts, lacking the courage to say, put it all together and forget the belt. So you've got her. Your team covers several blocks with the same result. You eat lunch in the van, on the run. You sell a couple parts, can't reconcile yourself to a life of vacuous vacuums, so you fantasize trying the swimming pool cleaning business. Lolling

ladies in topless bikinis in backyards, Seagram's Seven in hand, shimmer in tin foil heat. You

collect \$15.50 for a day's work, go home to the Ocean View apt. on PCH, to your wife of two months. You scan the want ads -- Kirby Vacuum is hiring: Sales manager trainees, guaranteed monthly salary, no canvassing